

## IN THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus, comprising:  
~~a Switch, the Switch including:~~
  - a port configured to receive a write command frame having a header with an OX\_ID or RX\_ID and defining an initiating Host and a target;
  - a trapping mechanism configured to trap the write command frame if the write command frame designates a predetermined Host\_ID and a predetermined target\_ID; and
  - a processor configured to process the trapped write command by ~~modifying~~ initializing either the OX\_ID or RX\_ID of the write command header and send a transfer ready command frame to the initiating Host before receiving the transfer ready command from the target, wherein the transfer ready command received from the target is suppressed.
2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the Switch is an initiating Switch coupled to the Host in a first SAN.
3. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the processor of the initiating Switch is further configured to modify the write command frame before forwarding the write command to the target.
4. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the initiating Switch is further configured to modify the write command frame by inserting an initializing RX\_ID value as a modified OX\_ID value for the write command before forwarding the write command to the target.
5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the initiating Switch uses the initialized RX\_ID value as a handle for accessing information pertaining to the write command session in a sessions ID table.
6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the processor of the initiating Switch is further configured to issue a Transfer Ready command to the Host.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the initiating Switch is further configured to initialize and use the initialized RX\_ID value for all communication related to the write frame between the initiating Switch and the Host.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the initiating Switch is further configured to modify the OX\_ID value with communications between the initiating Switch and the target.

9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the initiating Switch is further configured to transfer additional data frames to the target when the initiating Switch receives a Transfer Ready command associated with the write command frame from the target.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the Switch is a target Switch coupled to the target.

11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the target Switch forwards the write command frame to the target.

12. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the target Switch forwards data frames associated with the write command frame to the target after receiving a Transfer Ready command from the target.

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the target Switch is further configured to buffer the data frames prior to receipt of the Transfer Ready command.

14. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the target Switch is further configured to maintain a sessions ID table and to use the OX\_ID of the write command frame as an index to the session corresponding to the write command.

15. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the target Switch is further configured to modify the RX\_ID value for all communication related to the write command frame between the target Switch and the Host.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the target Switch is further configured to modify the OX\_ID value with communications between the target Switch and the target.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the Switch is further configured to use the RX\_ID value of trapped write commands to specify the amount of buffer space needed for the write command and use the write command frame to request the needed buffer space.

18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the Switch is further configured to use the RX\_ID value of trapped write commands to specify the amount of buffer space larger than needed for the write command and use the additional buffer space for subsequent write commands so that the Switch need not wait for a Transfer Ready command to transfer data related to the subsequent write command.

19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the Switch is further configured to, in the event the Switch does not have sufficient buffer space for the write command, to either:

- (i) generate a busy status signal to the initiating Host;
- (ii) placing the write command on a pending wait list; or
- (iii) forwarding the write command to the target.

20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:

a first SAN including the Switch;

a second SAN including a second Switch; and

an inter-SAN network connecting the first SAN and the second SAN.

21-23. (Canceled)

24. (New) A method comprising:

receiving a write command at a switch, the write command specifying a host identifier corresponding to a host and a target identifier corresponding to a target, the write command including an originator exchange identifier (OX\_ID) value and an uninitialized receiver exchange identifier (RX\_ID) value;

forwarding the write command to the target;

initializing the receiver exchange identifier (RX\_ID) value to generate an initialized RX\_ID value;

sending a transfer ready command including the initialized RX\_ID value to the host prior to receiving the transfer ready command from the target, wherein sending the transfer ready command to the host allows the switch to operate as a proxy for the target.

25. (New) The method of claim 24, further comprising configuring the switch to forward data frames associated with the write command received in response to the transfer Ready command to the target.

26. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein a second switch between the switch and the target receives data frames associated with the write command and buffers the data frames until a transfer ready command having an initialized RX\_ID is received from the target.

27. (New) An apparatus comprising:

means for receiving a write command at a switch, the write command specifying a host identifier corresponding to a host and a target identifier corresponding to a target, the write command including an originator exchange identifier (OX\_ID) value and an uninitialized receiver exchange identifier (RX\_ID) value;

means for forwarding the write command to the target;

means for initializing the receiver exchange identifier (RX\_ID) value to generate an initialized RX\_ID value;

means for sending a transfer ready command including the initialized RX\_ID value to the host prior to receiving the transfer ready command from the target, wherein sending the transfer ready command to the host allows the switch to operate as a proxy for the target.